

The Ripline



www.bris.ac.uk/depts/union/BUHABS

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Newsletter of the BRISTOL UNIVERSITY HOT AIR BALLOONING SOCIETY
in association with the U.W.E HOT AIR BALLOONING SOCIETY

Well spring is here, finally and BUHABS has BEEN FLYING! With the weather really looking up now is definitely the time to start signing up, flying and crewing. In the last couple of weeks of term we have a couple of important dairy dates for you all.

Firstly there is the BUHABS AGM when the committee for next year is elected. Turn up to have your say!

Secondly there is the Anniversary celebrations. BUHABS has been gracing the skies over Bristol for almost 16 years. By my calculations, that means BUHABS was formed when Ellie and I were 3 years old! Joking apart, that makes us one of the most successful clubs in the country. Certainly a good excuse for a celebration.

Ellie Fearon [redacted] and Hugo Williams [redacted]

AGM and Anniversary Meal

Annual General Meeting - I know we're all getting a little fed up with elections, but there's another one coming up! Its your chance to have your say about who runs BUHABS next year. The AGM will be held on *Friday 15th March at 7pm in the Union*. If you're interested in getting involved in the committee please e-mail us. Please do come along as we will be looking for ideas for next year as well! This will be followed by:

A few drinks at a pub somewhere, (possibly Finnegan's Wake) then:

The Anniversary Meal - 9pm at Sultans. Details, directions etc. to follow but please e-mail the committee as soon as possible on [redacted]



if you are interested so we can gauge numbers. In past years the anniversary celebrations have been really enjoyable and popular nights. It's a great way to meet up with everyone after quite a long break from flying. Good food, lots of drink and good company! Last years merriment is shown in the picture on the left!

Hoodies/Fleeces

The committee are very keen to get some hooded tops or fleeces made, so we can look hard when we walk round the university! Or not, anyway... We'd like design suggestions and will probably take advance orders. As always, suggestions or interest (with no commitment at this stage, we just want to gauge interest) can be e-mailed to the committee.

What's on the Web?

<http://www.airsport.de/>

Apart from the amazingly irritating, yet notably impressive, animated graphics that greet the eye when you access the website, it's well worth having a look. Lots of facts, designed for both those who absorb the spec's of various airborne devices with ease and interest and simpletons such as myself. You'll also find the usual picture archive, balloons in sexy and exotic places (and Bertie Bassett - he does seem to get around!) I guess I should mention the slight language barrier which might cause a slight hassle, ok the site is written completely in German, but a few hours slogging away with the dictionary and your laughing! Or maybe not, ok I'll admit that suggestion was rather crap!

<http://www.3601ballonscreensavers.myweb.nl/>

If you've ever wanted 3601 ballon (yes that's correct 'ballon', another international site, this one from our Dutch friends, available in English) screensavers, this is the site to visit. What more can I say?!

<http://spotlightongames.com/upandaway/>

If you have ever been desperately short of , ummmm, entertainment, perhaps you need to get out more or alternatively this website offers wholesome fun for all the family. The game you can probably print off from the website, or order in your preferred language—English, French, German, Swedish, Dutch, Norwegian or Giraffe, is aptly named the "Balmy Balloonist". Each player has a balloon which you have to fly around the world, or something. Hugo believes it would be a very good drinking game and would be well up for playing, especially if double vodkas were involved. [I never said that and I don't know what you're talking about! - H]

Again a reminder that the BUHABS website is still great, in English and is a goldmine of interesting stuff.



The Art of Ballooning

On that historic day of the first ever hot air balloon flight, back in 1783, those legendary heroes, Marquis D'Arlandes and Pilatre de Rozier, must have prayed to their God (probably some pagan wind god), lit their bonfire, hopped on to their huge paper bag and, not having a clue what was going to happen next... scared the willies out of themselves. (Personally I think that the link between first flights in hot air balloons and champagne is that those two French heroes probably got completely trolleyed before they took to the sky).



Psychologically not a lot has changed in two hundred years. You can often find the BUHABS pilots cowering in the back of the van being coaxed out by the experienced crew members. Or holding their hands (or in some cases handkerchief) in supplication to the sky hoping for some divine signal to tell them in what direction the wind is actually blowing. Occasionally you may see the higher (and I do not mean taller) pilots among us letting off a sacrificial balloon that will be cast skywards its fate unknown. These usually take the form of helpless small black helium filled



balloons, or just some green inexperienced pilot and their balloon who filled with youthful ignorance have not quite grasped the concept of 'windy'. Knowledge of this condition can only really be gained by experience even though young pilots will have listened religiously to the tales told by those sage like elders. These tales almost inevitably centre around the drag landing. The 'drag' being measured in units of metres or yards depending on the pilots age.

The inexperienced almost certainly learn quite quickly that 'windy' is a supernatural meteorological phenomenon that transports the balloon with great speed to somewhere the pilot's consciousness does not want to go. Which in the early days of a pilots career will include just about everywhere. It will also affect the pilots perception by making even the largest of grass fields contract into nothing more than a modest allotment plot. This change in perception has the side effect of the pilot developing an enhanced sense of ground phobia, and many times pilots will be seen descending ground wards only to climb hopelessly into the unforgiving sky. However this does not stop the pilot from letting their balloon hug the landscape, since they know that to go higher into the atmosphere only serves to increase 'the windiness'. Only when the pilot does summon up enough sense of reality to overcome their phobia will they even attempt to get close to the ground. The rate at which their fear is overcome generally determines the final outcome of the landing. The pilot who gradually and calmly becomes more and more courageous will almost certainly be more successful than the impulsive pilot that plummets earthwards. These latter pilots are those most susceptible to another state of the psyche called the 'out of basket experience'. Reports of these events are generally confined to the early years of ballooning, however occasional cases are still reported even today. The experience commonly involves the pilot trawling along the ground, their balloon sailing in front of them, their only link to it being via a thin red umbilical line.

When it is all finally over and the balloon comes to rest. The pilot can often be seen practising a ground worship ceremony. This takes the form of the pilot laying prostrate on the earth occasionally chanting in a groaning manner. Sometimes the chosen landowner will also participate in this ceremony.



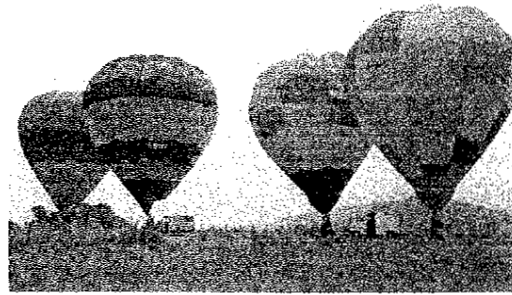
Their part is to dance around the field shaking their fists and shouting, "get off my land". In some regions an offering will sometimes be made to the landowner, consisting of some alcoholic beverage or a small piece of pottery.

For those with faith the likelihood of a windy event occurring can be gleaned from the prescient knowledge of the Oracles of Bristol Airport. Little is known about their methods or tools of the trade, but it is rumoured that they make use of a rams head, a wood fire and heavy metal music.

The smoke as it drifts into the atmosphere revealing future events such as the cloudbase, wind speed and direction. The wise pilot will not however completely trust such foreseers (especially the BBC) and they are usually well practised in reading the signs available in nature to make their decisions. Each pilot will almost certainly have their own sacred 'met tree'. The thrashing of which will serve to tell them that their time will be better spent catching up on vital sleep lost on Friday night than to enter the world of 'the windy'. As one old, wise, probably boring and lacking in any spirit of adventure pilot once said. "It is better to be on the ground wishing you were up there. Than up there wishing you were on the ground."

Robin Corcoran

This article can be found on the BUHABS Website - Along with lots of other entertaining stuff!



Bristol City of Culture Bid Balloon

Following on from the last issue of Ripline, the Bristol 2008 balloon had its first flight on Saturday the 19th January at the Chateaux D'Oex Balloon fiesta in Switzerland. The balloon was made to support Bristol's bid to become European City of Culture in 2008 and features images of prominent Bristol landmarks. The balloon is a Cameron Z105. This means it is the same volume as our balloon (105,000 cubic feet) but is of different design, with smoother sides to display the images accurately. The pictures below show this artwork.

